

SOUTH UNIMAK AND SHUMAGIN ISLANDS
JUNE SALMON FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN, 1998

By

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INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to provide commercial fishers and processors with information the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) will use to manage the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June Fishery. There are several procedures that fishers and processors need to comply with to facilitate the management of this fishery.

The first fishing period may be as early as June 10, however, the opening may be delayed if an unacceptably high number of chum salmon are present. Chum salmon abundance will be determined by ADF&G test-fish projects in both the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands areas. In addition, the department requests that subsistence fishers provide any information they can regarding their personal catches of sockeye and chum salmon in early June.

Inseason announcements will be broadcast over A.M. radio station KSDP in Sand Point, VHF channels 6 & 73, and on Single Side Band (SSB) 3230, 3261, and 4125. Information may also be obtained over the ADF&G record-a-phone in Sand Point at 383-2334 (383-ADFG).

As required by 5 AAC 39.130 (a)(3) buyers must report daily their salmon purchases by species, (in both numbers of fish and pounds) and number of deliveries by gear to either ADF&G offices in Cold Bay and Sand Point or to the ADF&G representative on the grounds at South Unimak aboard an enforcement vessel. Processors must provide the department with catch reports as soon as possible on the morning after a fishing period ends. Contact can be made over VHF 6, SSB 3230, or SSB 3261. Buyers may also phone or fax their information in, either to the Cold Bay or Sand Point offices.

Cold Bay	Telephone: 532-2419	Fax: 532-2470
Sand Point	Telephone: 383-2066	Fax: 383-2606

Fish tickets must be given to the ADF&G representative at South Unimak or mailed to one of the addresses listed below:

Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game
P.O. Box 50
Cold Bay, AK 99571

Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game
P.O. Box 129
Sand Point, AK 99661

Fish tickets must be delivered to ADF&G offices in Sand Point or Cold Bay within seven days of the purchase date or be hand delivered to an ADF&G representative on the fishing grounds. If compliance with this causes undue inconvenience, processors must contact ADF&G to make other arrangements.

CHANGES MADE BY ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES AT JANUARY 1998 MEETING

The chum salmon cap was lowered from 700,000 to a floating cap that can range from 350,000 to 650,000 fish depending on a Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim (A-Y-K) harvest projection based on the previous year's harvest of summer chum salmon in A-Y-K. The projected A-Y-K summer chum salmon index group harvest will be used to establish the chum salmon cap. The A-Y-K summer chum index group includes chum salmon taken in the Yukon River summer commercial and subsistence fisheries, the Kotzebue commercial fishery, the Norton Sound commercial fishery, and the Kuskokwim commercial fishery. Management concerns for specific chum salmon stocks in A-Y-K are also a factor in determining the cap. Based on the latest A-Y-K harvest projection, using the A-Y-K summer index group, the 1998 chum salmon cap for the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fishery will be 350,000 to 400,000 fish.

A commercial test fishery for all gear types may begin as early as June 10. However seine and drift gillnet gear may initially be allowed a six hour fishing period while set gillnet gear will be permitted a minimum of 16 hours. If the sockeye to chum ratio is 2 to 1 or greater the fishing period may be extended. The set gillnet fishing period may be extended if the set gillnet sockeye to chum salmon ratio is equal to or more than the recent 10 year average, presently 9.5 to 1 at South Unimak and 11.5 to 1 in the Shumagin Islands (Table 4), regardless of the seine and drift gillnet ratios.

In the **Unimak District** during June, the shoreward end of a set gillnet may not be placed further than one half mile from the mean high water mark.

All salmon caught by CFEC permit holders must be retained, and each CFEC permit holder must report the number of salmon caught, including those taken but not sold, on an ADF&G fish ticket. For purposes of this section, "**caught**" means brought on board the vessel.

A person may not use or employ an aircraft to locate salmon for commercial taking of salmon or to direct commercial fishing operations in the Alaska Peninsula Area one hour before, during, and one hour after a commercial salmon fishing period.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

The South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June Fishery Management Plan is in effect from June 10 through June 30. However, the opening date of the fishery may be delayed, depending on the results of the ADF&G test fish programs. In 1998, ADF&G plans to use three test fishing boats at South Unimak and one test boat in the Shumagin Islands

Historical sockeye salmon abundance generally peaks between June 13-22, but rapidly declines after that date.

The department will manage the fishery to minimize the chum salmon catch while attempting to obtain the sockeye salmon guideline harvest levels (GHL).

The South Unimak fishery includes the following locations (Figure 1):

- A. Unimak District as described in 5 AAC 09.200.
- B. Bechevin Bay Section of the Northwestern District as described in 5 AAC 09.200.

The following portions of the Southwestern District:

- C. Ikatan Bay Section as described in 5 AAC 09.200.
- D. Those waters of the Southwestern District in addition to the Ikatan Bay Section listed below: (Note: this does not include CLOSED WATERS as described under 5 AAC 09.350)
 - 1. Those waters north and west of a line from Cape Pankof Light to Thin Point (54°57.43' N. lat., 162°33.20' W. long).
 - 2. Those waters enclosed by a line from Thin Point to the northern tip of Stag Point on Deer Island to Dolgoi Cape (55°03.75' N. lat., 161°44' W. long) and from Bluff Point (55°10' N. lat., 161°53.75' W. long.) to Arch Point (55°12.33' N. lat., 161°54.25' W. long.).

The Shumagin Islands fishery includes only the Shumagin Islands Section of the Southeastern District (Figure 2) as described in 5 AAC 09.200. DESCRIPTION OF DISTRICTS AND SECTIONS.

Fishermen should be aware that waters closed to commercial salmon fishing as specified under 5 AAC 09.350 in the regulation book are in effect during June. Gillnet fishermen are reminded that the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fisheries are the only fisheries in the South Peninsula which have no minimum salmon gillnet mesh size.

The area of Sanak Island south of 54.33.17' N. lat., (the latitude of Hague Rock) and east of 163°03.60' W. long., (the longitude of Cape Pankof Light) as shown in Figure 1. will be closed to commercial salmon fishing during June by emergency order. Historical commercial salmon fishing records indicate that very limited effort has occurred in this area. However, during the 1990-91 fishing season, effort in the Sanak Island area increased and a substantial number of chum salmon were harvested. Closure of this area is an attempt to minimize the chum salmon harvest and to provide for a fishery in other areas where harvests have demonstrated greater sockeye to chum salmon ratios.

Prior to June 10, ADF&G will issue a news release informing the fleet that the advance notice prior to a fishing period will be reduced to three (3) hours, however the department will attempt to provide as much advance notice as possible. The BOF indicated that ADF&G may allow a six hour commercial test fishery on June 10 and this fishery can be extended if the ratio is 2 to 1 or

better. However, due to the low chum salmon cap in 1998 (350,000 to 400,000 fish), ADF&G is reluctant to allow a commercial fishery without having test fishing results that indicate a sockeye to chum salmon ratio substantially higher than 2 to 1.

If sockeye to chum salmon ratios from the test fisheries are substantially higher than 2 to 1, a six hour commercial test fishery will probably occur on June 10 from 6:00 a.m. until 12 noon (set net gear would have a 16 hour period). If fishermen report good sockeye to chum salmon ratios, ADF&G will consider extending the period. Fishing time for set gillnet gear may be extended independent of other gear as long as the set gillnet sockeye to chum salmon ratio does not fall below the recent 10-year average, the chum cap is not reached, and the sockeye salmon guideline harvest is not reached. If a commercial fishery does not occur on June 10, but test fishing during June 10, produces a sockeye to chum salmon ratio substantially higher than 2 to 1, there will be a short commercial test fishery on June 11.

If a commercial test fishery is not allowed on June 11, ADF&G will consider a short test fishery on June 12 if the sockeye to chum salmon ratio from the June 11 ADF&G test fishery is substantially better than two to one.

If a commercial test fishery is not allowed on June 12, there will be a six hour test fishery on June 13. If fishermen report good sockeye to chum salmon ratios, ADF&G will consider extending the fishing period. If the period is not extended, a second fishing period will be announced after the first commercial test fisheries' harvest is tallied and analyzed. The length and time of the second fishing period will depend on the results of the first fishing period. Because of the low cap, ADF&G will need to consider the volume of chum salmon and the sockeye to chum salmon ratio when establishing fishing periods.

If sockeye to chum salmon commercial test fishery ratios remain below two to one, ADF&G will continue to use brief commercial seine and drift gillnet test fishery openings until June 15, when management will return to the established practices of optimizing sockeye salmon harvests while not allowing the chum salmon cap to be exceeded, as well as other late-season regulatory mandates of the BOF.

SOCKEYE GUIDELINE HARVEST LEVELS

The 1998 South Unimak June sockeye salmon guideline harvest level (GHL) is 1,529,000 fish. The Shumagin Islands June sockeye salmon GHL is 336,000 fish. The combined South Unimak-Shumagin Islands sockeye salmon GHL is 1,865,000 fish.

CHUM SALMON CAP

Based on the 1997 harvest of summer chum salmon in A-Y-K, the 1998 South Unimak-Shumagin Islands June cap will be 350,000 to 400,000 chum salmon. If the chum salmon cap is reached, the fisheries will close regardless of how many sockeye salmon remain unharvested on the guideline harvest level. The BOF has indicated that keeping the chum salmon catch below the cap has precedence over attaining the sockeye salmon guideline harvest level.

SAFEGUARDS TO PREVENT EXCEEDING THE CHUM SALMON CAP

ADF&G may take the following actions to limit the harvest of chum salmon:

1. Curtailment or complete closure of any location demonstrating substantially higher chum to sockeye salmon ratios than other major harvest locations.
2. Possible reductions in the duration of fishing periods for seine and drift gillnet gear (the BOF intended set gillnet fishing periods to be at least 16 hours in duration when it is necessary to shorten fishing periods to reduce the harvest of chum salmon).
3. After the harvest figures have been reported and all fishing effort accounted for, the fishery may be reopened on short notice, depending on the need to maximize fishing time to harvest sockeye salmon. The commercial fishery will not reopen until the department receives all harvest reports. The duration of fishing periods will depend on the reported sockeye to chum salmon ratio.
4. In the event, the chum salmon harvest has exceeded 250,000 fish, it may be necessary to reduce or close the Cape Lutke Section depending on the cumulative chum harvest, the date, amount of gear, and the daily harvest rates. ADF&G recognizes substantial fishing effort is required at Cape Lutke to harvest a large South Unimak sockeye salmon GHL, however this location has produced sudden and large chum salmon catches by seine gear during late June and needs to be closely monitored to avoid exceeding the chum salmon cap.
5. As the harvest of chum salmon approaches 350,000 fish, the duration of fishing periods and the area open to commercial salmon fishing may be restricted further.
6. After June 24, the BOF restricted the duration of commercial salmon fishing periods for seine and drift gillnet gear in the South Unimak or Shumagin Islands fisheries to six hours per day if the sockeye to chum salmon ratios are two to one or lower in that fishery. If the ratio of sockeye salmon to chum salmon is two to one or less for any three aggregate days in either of the two fisheries, then that fishery will be closed to all gear types for the balance of June.

7. Management action taken shall demonstrate that the maximum or less harvest of 350,000 to 400,000 chum salmon supersedes attempts to reach the sockeye salmon guideline harvest levels.

ADF&G will remain flexible, recognizing that inseason conditions may require actions different from the preseason management plan. ADF&G encourages suggestions from the public, Fish and Game Advisory Committees, fisheries organizations, and processors in reviewing the management of this fishery.

Fishermen are encouraged to report sockeye to chum ratios throughout the fishery. Fishing periods may be extended based upon verbal reports from fishermen on the grounds. This is most critical when the chum salmon cap is well under 350,000 fish and fishing time must be maximized to harvest the sockeye salmon GHL. If reports are not received, the department will assume the sockeye to chum salmon ratio in a given area is poor and the commercial fishing period in that area will close as scheduled. If fishermen encounter substantial numbers of chum salmon, they should immediately report the situation and location to ADF&G.

Fishermen can report sockeye to chum salmon ratios to ADF&G by one of the following methods:

1. Through the fish processors or their tenders.
2. To Fish & Wildlife patrol vessels on the grounds over VHF channel 6.
3. Directly to ADF&G in Cold Bay or Sand Point over radio frequencies VHF 6 and SSB 3261.

Fishermen should report sockeye to chum salmon ratios well before the scheduled closing time of a fishing period to allow ADF&G sufficient time to analyze the data and make an announcement. Delays in reporting ratios could result in lost fishing time.

Table 1. South Unimak June commercial salmon harvest, in number of fish^a, by species, 1988-97.

Year	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
1988	2,125	474,457	11	86,678	464,765
1989	2,263	1,347,547	0	154,168	407,635
1990	8,465	1,090,710	1	444,442	455,238
1991	3,066	1,215,658	5	500,922	670,103
1992	2,373	2,046,022	3	501,127	323,891
1993	4,587	2,366,573	506	37,735	381,941
1994	4,468	1,001,250	1,271	1,731,741	374,409
1995	7,850	1,451,490	5,102	119,094	342,307
1996	1,228	572,495	11,730	146,799	129,889
1997	3,041	1,179,179	501	332,262	196,016
1988-97					
Average	4,047	1,285,134	2,070	413,634	394,464

^a Numbers of salmon do not include test fish catches.

Table 2. Shumagin Islands June commercial salmon harvest, in number of fish^a, by species, 1988-97.

Year	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
1988	1,939	282,230	244	93,546	61,946
1989	495	396,958	0	45,067	47,528
1990	1,868	255,585	0	70,798	63,501
1991	1,407	333,272	7	118,215	102,602
1992	1,387	411,834	1	140,963	102,312
1993	4,879	607,171	727	43,401	150,306
1994	3,122	460,013	308	760,773	207,756
1995	6,897	653,831	940	59,541	195,126
1996	1,617	456,475	1,489	230,885	229,931
1997	2,770	449,002	59	273,675	126,309
1988-97					
Average	2,623	428,597	413	173,688	129,001

^a Numbers of salmon do not include test fish catches.

Table 3. Combined South Unimak-Shumagin Islands June commercial salmon harvest, in number of fish^a, by species, 1988-97.

Year	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
1988	4,064	756,687	255	180,224	526,711
1989	2,758	1,744,505	0	199,235	455,163
1990	10,333	1,346,295	1	515,240	518,739
1991	4,473	1,548,930	12	619,137	772,705
1992	3,760	2,457,856	4	642,090	426,203
1993	9,466	2,973,744	1,233	81,136	532,247
1994	7,590	1,461,263	1,579	2,492,514	582,165
1995	14,747	2,105,321	6,042	178,635	537,433
1996	2,845	1,028,970	13,219	377,684	359,820
1997	5,811	1,628,181	560	605,937	322,325
1988-97					
Average	6,671	1,713,730	2,483	587,322	523,465

^a Numbers of salmon do not include test fish catches.

Table 4. June sockeye and chum salmon catches by set gillnet gear, 1988-97.

Year	South Unimak		Shumagin Islands	
	Sockeye	Chum	Sockeye	Chum
1988	94,068	13,695	78,839	10,792
1989	70,174	5,705	36,098	3,030
1990	54,686	5,900	37,617	4,390
1991	25,707	3,937	64,733	6,846
1992	88,068	3,773	37,576	3,803
1993	66,304	8,323	75,913	3,146
1994	56,900	5,593	113,090	7,179
1995	47,097	8,393	120,879	12,232
1996	23,247	2,270	114,158	9,482
1997	108,005	9,371	110,199	7,891
Total	634,256	66,960	789,102	68,791
Sockeye to chum salmon ratio	9.5 to 1		11.5 to 1	

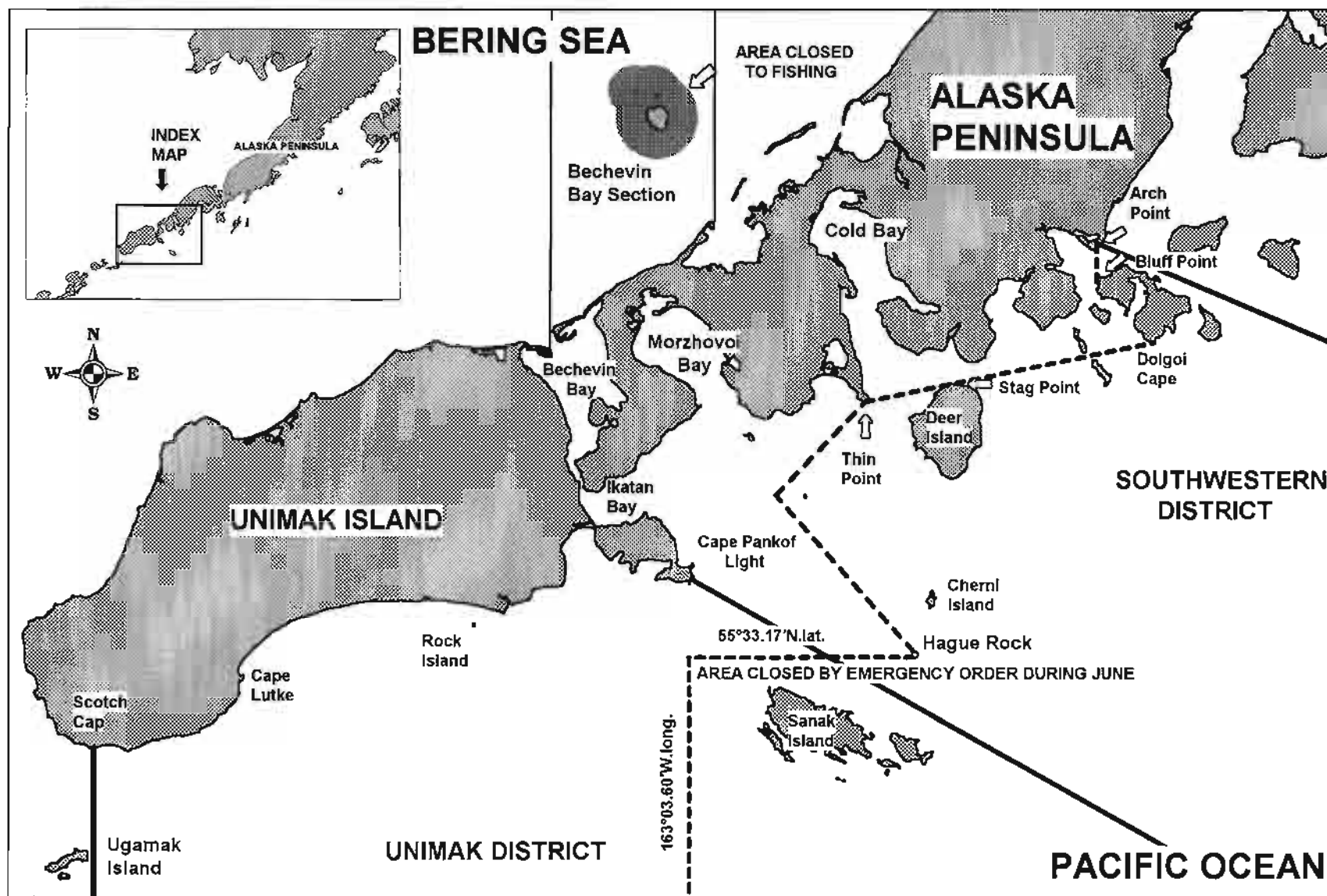


Figure 1. Map of the South Unimak June fishery.

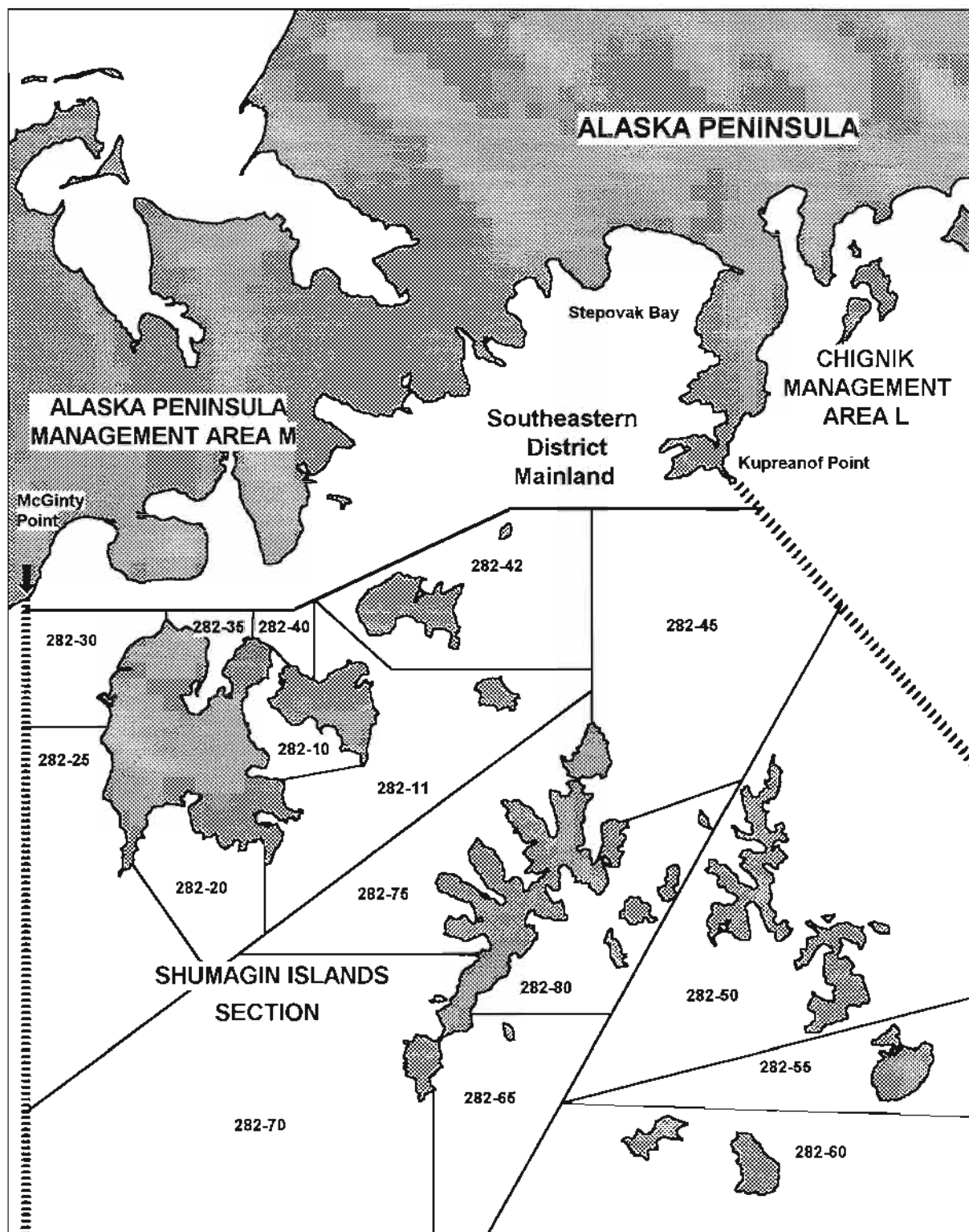


Figure 2. Map of the Shumagin Islands Section with the statistical salmon fishing areas shown.

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